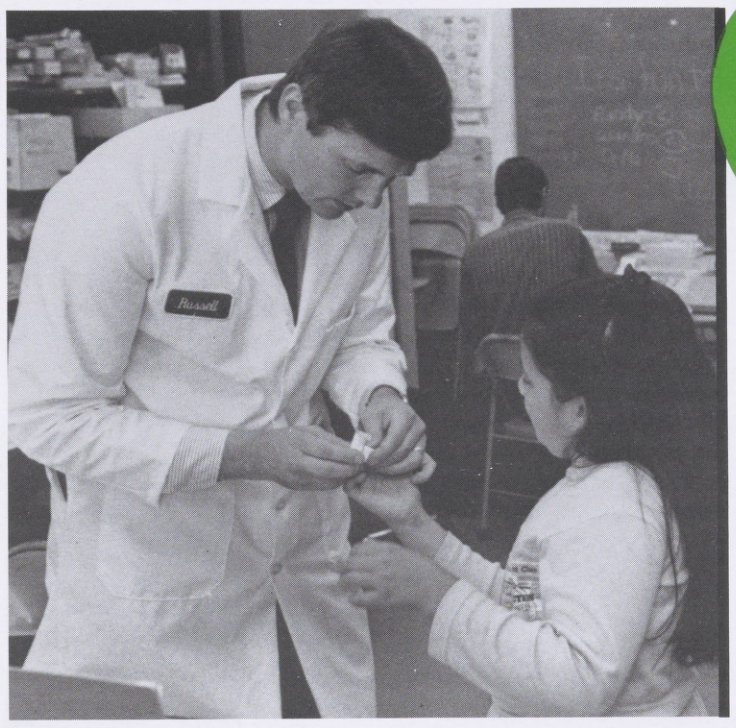
January/February 1991 Volume 16, Number 1

A summary of recent news stories from the University of California, San Francisco

UCSF

News for You

New Center Trains Physicians in Cholesterol Problems



Mikkel Aaland

Tom Bersot pricks the finger of an E.R. Taylor Elementary School student as part of the SPIN program.

Practicing physicians soon will become experts on cholesterol thanks to a new center at the UCSF-associated Gladstone Foundation Laboratories for Cardiovascular Disease and the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. The center is one of six recently set up by the American Heart Association to give doctors expertise in the care of patients with cholesterol problems and lipid disorders that increase the risk of heart disease.

The Gladstone/LBL center will train some 85 physicians each year from California, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona. Scientists Thomas Bersot, a UCSF researcher at the Gladstone Labs based at SFGH, and H. Robert Superko of LBL will co-direct the training program.

Meanwhile, as part of their cholesterol awareness program, the Gladstone Labs in November tested third-graders at the E.R. Taylor Elementary School. The testing was part of a program called SPIN (Special Program in Nutrition) devised by the Gladstone Labs to educate children and their families about diet and health.

Finally, the Gladstone Labs also are testing Wells Fargo bank employees throughout the state in order to research a rare genetic cause of high blood cholesterol. Gladstone chose the bank because a large group needs to be tested, as many as up to 12,000 people. Those found to have high cholesterol are being offered additional medical counseling.

Insulin Linked to Breast Cancer

A team of scientists from the Mount Zion Medical Center at UCSF and Catania, Italy has shown in recent studies a link between insulin and breast cancer. After testing the breast tissue cells from 159 women with breast cancer and 33 healthy women, they found the content of insulin molecules, or "receptors," in certain breast cells was nearly seven times higher than in normal breast cells.

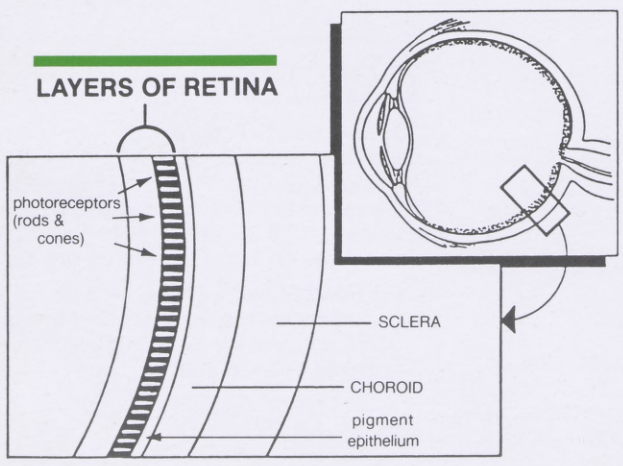
Insulin is produced in the pancreas and secreted into the blood when glucose levels rise. Insulin receptors are those molecules that recognize and bind with insulin to trigger the hormone to act in the body's cells.

Larger tumors appeared to have a higher insulin level, which showed a relationship between insulin and the aggressiveness of the breast cancer.

If further studies confirm a link between insulin and breast cancer, measuring breast tissue cells for insulin could be an effective way to determine the stage of the cancer, says Ira D. Goldfine, director of the Diabetes and Endocrine Research Laboratory at Mount Zion.

Meanwhile, in a study published in December's *Cancer Research*, Goldfine and his group have found that when progesterone was added to breast cancer cells, the level of insulin receptors further increased. That laboratory finding suggests that the two hormones are not a good mix and progesterone may stimulate growth of breast cancer cells by increasing their sensitivity to insulin.

Major Advance in Retarding Blindness



Retinal degeneration begins in the light-sensing rods and cones.

UCSF researchers have successfully retarded blindness in experimental rats by injecting a drug (called bFGF—basic fibroblast growth factor) directly into the eye. Though the effect was temporary, this is the first time any injected substance has significantly delayed the death of visual cells, the so-called rods and cones, in animals or humans.

While the researchers, led by Matthew M. LaVail of the UCSF Beckman Vision Center, are the first to admit they are a long way from having a useful therapeutic drug, they believe it is an important first step.

In the experiment, a single injection of the drug into the eye dramatically slowed degeneration of the retina for up to two months in rats that have an inherited disease similar to retinitis pigmentosa in humans. Normally these rats begin to lose retinal cells a few weeks after birth, and almost all the cells are dead by two months of age.

In Brief

UCSF Wins Laurel Heights Lawsuit

Justice Harry Brauer, sitting as Superior Court Judge pro tem, has ruled against the Laurel Heights Improvement Association (LHIA), which had charged UCSF with "deceit" and "concealment" in its plans for the use of the Laurel Heights campus at 3333 California Street. In his 37-page opinion, Brauer dismissed LHIA's request to block the UCSF School of Pharmacy and other research programs from moving into the building.

The decision comes on the heels of another court ruling favoring UCSF in November by Superior Court Judge Ira A. Brown, Jr., who dismissed the LHIA's claim that the Laurel Heights project would violate recorded restrictions on the property. A third lawsuit, contesting the adequacy of the new Laurel Heights Environmental Impact Report, remains under consideration by Judge Brown.

Diabetic Foot Program Opens

The UCSF High-Risk Diabetic Foot Program now is open and accepting patients. The program detects and manages the recurrent foot sores that can plague those diabetics with nerve damage, and uses such unique new approaches as the "San Francisco Custom Molded Shoe." The clinic is located in Room 540 of the Ambulatory Care Center, 400 Parnassus. For further information call 476-1104. (See patient feature inside.)

Clinic Specializes in Weight Problems of Children, Teens

The alarming increase in childhood obesity has led to the creation of a new clinic at UCSF. The Pediatric Obesity Clinic for children and teens offers a comprehensive assessment of weight problems plus followup programs in weight management, including individual counseling and group sessions.

Among the programs offered at the clinic is Shapedown, which builds on the strengths of the family to change nutritional patterns and exercise habits. Located on the second floor of the Ambulatory Care Center, 400 Parnassus, the clinic is part of the new Pediatric Nutrition Center, under the Division of Behavioral and Developmental Pediatrics. Co-directors are Laurel Mellin and Susan Johnson. For further information call 476-4575.

Live Alone . . . Die Earlier

Middle-aged American men who live alone or with someone other than a spouse are twice as likely to die within 20 years as men of the same age who live with their spouses, says a UCSF study of nearly 8,000 adults.

Led by Maradee A. Davis, the researchers found that 23 percent of men between 45 and 64 who lived without a spouse died within 10 years, compared to 11 percent of similarly aged men who lived with their wives. This was true even after other controlling factors were taken into account, such as income, race, education, smoking, alcohol consumption, physical activity and obesity.

The type of living arrangement also influenced the length of survival for men between 65 and 74, but not as strongly. In general, the study also found that living arrangements for women was not associated with survival.

More News for You
on the back page

What's happening

January/February 1
A bimonthly calend
events at UC San F

Special Events

STANFORD STRING QUARTET

Tues., Jan. 29
The Stanford String Quartet. To perform Brahms' *Quartet in C minor, Op. 51, No. 1.* Tickets $5/3. Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Reception 5 p.m. Concert 5:45 p.m. Call 476-2542.

Brown Bag Lectures

A series of free lectures held weekly on Wednesdays at the Parnassus campus (P), Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus; held monthly on Thursdays at UCSF-Mission Center Building (MCB), 1855 Folsom St, Rm. 125 and on Tuesdays at Mount Zion Medical Center of UCSF (MZ), 1600 Divisadero, Herbst Hall. All lectures held at noon. For further information call 476-4394.

Jan. 2
Understanding the Development of Self-Esteem. (P)

Jan. 9
How to Live Longer & Feel Better. (P)

Jan. 10
Healing Power of Humor. (MCB)

Jan. 15
Ethical Issues of Dying & Death. (MZ)

Jan. 16
(See Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.)

Jan. 23
Beyond Eye Glasses? What's New in Eye Care. (P)

Jan. 30
The Biology of Aging. (P)

Feb. 6
Yan Can Cook. (P)

Feb. 13
Can Lifestyle Changes Reverse Heart Disease? (P)

Feb. 14
Twelve Steps to Cancer Prevention & Better Health. (MCB)

Feb. 19
Chronic Muscle Pain: Fibrosistis & Stress. (MZ)

Feb. 20
Do We Still Need to Worry About Tooth Decay? (P)

Feb. 27
Nutritional Needs of the Elderly. (P)

Volunteer Orientation

Program to acquaint new & prospective volunteers with opportunities available in the Medical Center at UCSF. Held in Rm. 30 Medical Sciences (basement), 513 Parnassus, on the Tuesdays listed below. For further information call 476-1196.

Jan. 8, 9-11 a.m.
Jan. 22, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Feb. 5, 9-11 a.m.
Feb. 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Bay Area Women in the Marketplace

A lecture series devoted to successful women entrepreneurs in the Bay Area. Co-sponsored by Campus Tours/Speakers Bureau and Women's Resource Center. All lectures held at noon in Rm. 301, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus. Call 476-4394 or 476-0400 for information.

Tues., Jan. 8
Shirley Fong Torres, president, Chinatown Walking Tours & Cooking Co.

Tues., Jan. 22
Regina Phelps, president, Health Plus.

Tues., Feb. 5
Lee Nold, president, ProServ.

Tues., Feb. 19
Barbara Fakkema, owner/manager, Events, Etc.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

UCSF commemorates the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Call 476-6932 for further information.

Wed., Jan. 16.
Cultural Festival. Features a variety of ethnic foods, dance & music. Millberry Union Gym, 500 Parnassus. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Wed., Jan. 16
The 1964 Civil Rights Act: 27 Years Later. Shawna Marshall, civil rights attorney & fellow, Stanford Law School. Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 17
Rachel Bagby: Keeping the Dream Alive. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Tues., Jan. 22
Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Reception. Chancellor Krevans presents MLK Awards to one faculty member, one student & one staff employee. Location to be announced. Noon-1 p.m.

Black Heritage Month

UCSF celebrates its black heritage throughout the month of February with a number of special events, including those below.

Tues., Feb. 5
Callin' It As She Sees It: A Conversation with bell hooks. Noon-1 p.m. Reception 4-5 p.m. For location call 476-0400.

Fri., Feb. 15
Cole Hall Matinee Cabaret: Diane Ferlatte. Bay Area storyteller weaves African-American tales. Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Noon. Special children's performance at 10:30 a.m.

Thurs., Feb. 21
Female Rap Rising: The State of Women in Hip Hop. KRON TV's Dominique DiPrima, host of *Home Turf.* Call 476-0400 for location.

Institute of Healing Arts & Sciences

All talks are free and held on Fridays at noon in Rm. 721, Nursing Bldg., enter through 521 Parnassus. Call Marie Lehrer at 476-3939 for complete schedule.

Jan. 4
Psychic Healing Demystified.

Jan. 11
The Healing Power of Poetry.

Jan. 18
Healing & Radiant Aliveness.

Jan. 25
Patterns of Stress.

Senior Health Education Programs

Free lectures by UCSF staff geared to senior citizens. Schedules are subject to change. Call 476-3206 for complete schedule and to confirm events.

Thurs., Jan. 24
Helping Friends Who May Be Depressed. Seventh Ave. Senior Center, 1329 Seventh Ave. 1 p.m.

Tues., Jan. 29
Over the Counter Drugs. Calvary Presbyterian, 2515 Fillmore St. 11 a.m.

Mon., Feb. 4
Introduction to CPR & Emergency Response Systems. Rose Resnick Center, 1299 Bush St. 1 p.m.

Thurs., Feb. 14
Health Myths. Senior Power Club, 737 Folsom St. 1 p.m.

Wed., Feb. 27
Emotional Problems of the Elderly. Diamond Heights Senior Center, 117 Diamond St. 1 p.m.

Cole Hall Cinema

Films are shown on Thursdays and Fridays in Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Children under 14 $2; UCSF students & Millberry Union members $2.50; seniors $3; general $3.50. Call 476-2542. (Movies subject to change.)

Jan. 10 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Jan. 11 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
Wild at Heart.

Jan. 17 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Jan. 18 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
Goodfellas.

Jan. 24 at 5:45 & 7:45 p.m.
Jan. 25 at 6:30 & 8:30 p.m.
Pump Up the Volume.

Jan. 31 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Feb. 1 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
Ghost.

Feb. 7 at 5:45 & 8 p.m.
Feb. 8 at 6:30 & 8:45 p.m.
White Palace.

Feb. 14 at 5:45 & 8 p.m.
Feb. 15 at 6:30 & 8:45 p.m.
Reversal of Fortune.

Feb. 21 at 5:45 & 8 p.m.
Feb. 22 at 6:30 & 8:45 p.m.
Postcards from the Edge.

Campus Tours

All tours are free and take place at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays, Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 and Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26. Meet in the lobby of Medical Sciences building, 513 Parnassus. For further information call 476-4394.

Community Health Talks

A series of free lecture/discussions sponsored by Public Service Outreach Programs held at UCSF Laurel Heights (LH), 3333 California St., or the Parnassus campus (P), Rm. 302, Health Sciences West (enter through 513 Parnassus). 7-8:30 p.m. Free parking available. Call 476-8429 for details.

Thurs., Jan. 17
Militarism & World Health. (P)

Thurs., Jan. 24
Choices in the Last Days of Life. (LH)

Thurs., Feb. 7
Medical Evaluation of Memory Loss. (P)

Thurs., Feb. 21
Healthy Aging. (LH)

Women's Programs

Unless otherwise noted, events sponsored by UCSF Women's Resource Center. For recorded program information and locations call 476-0400. To pre-register call 476-5836.

Thurs., Jan. 17
(See Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.)

Thurs., Jan. 24
The Classroom Climate: Chilly for Women Students. Why women students receive less attention and respect, and strategies to deal with it. Noon-1 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 24
The Classroom Climate: Chilly for Women Faculty. Why women faculty receive harsher criticism and less respect, and strategies to deal with it. Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. 4-5 p.m. Followed by reception, School of Nursing Bldg. mezzanine, enter through 521 Parnassus. 5-6 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women & the Office of Academic Affairs.

Wed., Jan. 30
Breaking the Silence: The Lesbian Survivor—from Incest to Battery. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m. Sponsored by the Rape Prevention Education Program.

Sat., Feb. 2
Older Women's League (OWL) Conference: You Can Be the Center of Your Life. One-day conference on the issues faced by women as they age in our society. $15-25. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Call 550-1660 or 826-6023 to pre-register.

Tues., Feb. 5
(See Black Heritage Month events.)

Thurs., Feb. 21
(See Black Heritage Month events.)

Recreation & Fitness

Don't sit on the sidelines. Millberry Union Fitness Center offers a great variety of recreation & fitness classes including Brazilian samba, volleyball, guitar & much more. Children's programs, too. Community registration for Winter '91 begins **Tues., Jan. 8,** at Millberry Union Fitness Center, 500 Parnassus. For further information and a free brochure call 476-1115.

CPR Training

"Save A Heart" Program. CPR classes sponsored by UCSF CPR Center. Rm. 229, Nursing Bldg., enter through 521 Parnassus. Classes are from 9 a.m.-noon or 6-9 p.m. on Jan. 4, 12, 15 & 26; Feb. 2, 5, 16 & 19. $20. For information & registration call 476-1817.

CPR Road Show. Traveling CPR instruction by volunteer instructors sponsored by the UCSF Center for Pre-Hospital Research & Training. Call 476-8502.

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Breast Cancer Screening

Women can have low-cost mammograms—x-rays to screen for breast cancer—from a mobile van that travels to convenient Bay Area locations. The procedure takes approximately 20 minutes and costs $50. Your physician's approval is required. For appointments call 476-2193 between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. A $50 mammography screening also is available at the Mount Zion Hospital of UCSF Radiology Department. Call 885-7710.

Jan. 2-4
UCSF-Mission Center. 1855 Folsom St. in parking lot off 15th St.

Jan. 7-11
Marina Green. In parking lot near Goodwill shed & Ft. Mason.

Jan. 14-18
Embarcadero. On Drumm St. between Sacramento & Clay Sts.

Jan. 22-25
Westlake Shopping Center. Daly City, on Park Plaza Dr. near Safeway. (Jan. 21 is a holiday.)

Jan. 28-Feb. 1
Sunset District. On Irving St. between 25th & 26th Aves.

Feb. 4-8
Richmond District. On 7th Ave. between Geary & Clement Sts.

Feb. 11-15
Taraval St. Between 17th & 18th Aves.

Feb. 19-22
UCSF-Laurel Heights. 3333 California St. in parking lot on left. (Feb. 18 is a holiday.)

Feb. 25-Mar. 1
Embarcadero. On Drumm St. between Sacramento & Clay Sts.

Personal Safety

Sat., Jan. 26
Tear Gas Certification Class. Laguna Honda School Conference Room. 1350 Seventh Ave. 9 a.m.-noon. $20. Pre-registration required. Call Chris Yee at 476-5683 for information.

Survivors Support Group. Looking at how sexual assault can affect day-to-day life. Sponsored by Rape Prevention Education Program. Twelve consecutive sessions, 5:30-7 p.m. Dates & locations to be announced. $5-$25. Call 476-5222 to register.

The following presentations are available by appointment to groups in the community or at your workplace:

Crime Prevention. Presented by UCSF Police Department. Call 476-5683.

Personal Safety. Presented by UCSF Rape Prevention Education Program. Call 476-5222.

Blood Donation

Tues., Jan. 22
Campus Blood Drive. Blood may be given in Millberry Union main lounge, 500 Parnassus, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., and School of Nursing Bldg. mezzanine level, enter through 521 Parnassus, 11:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

You don't have to wait for a blood drive to give blood. You may donate any weekday 10 a.m.-8 p.m. or Saturday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at UCSF's **Blood Donor Center,** Rm. 131 Long Hospital, 505 Parnassus. For information & appointments call 476-6989.

UCSF

University of California, San Francisco
News and Public Information Services
513 Parnassus Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94143-0462

Her foot problems began with the big toe she eventually lost.

Her doctors recommended amputation.

But Catherine Terry was unwilling to give up. Unwilling to sacrifice her leg to the diabetes that has plagued her for over 20 years.

Catherine doesn't look the part of a severe diabetic. She is tall and slender, with an athletic bearing. Her manner is direct. She exudes confidence and optimism. But she injects herself with insulin several times a day. She has been in and out of hospitals since she was 18. And she has lost a toe, eye and kidney to this debilitating disease.

Her foot problems began with the big toe she eventually lost. A callus on the underside of her right toe caused an ulcer to form under the skin. Someone else with an ulcerated toe, and without diabetes, would have felt the pain. But not Catherine, because diabetes often causes neuropathy, or nerve damage. Only when she became violently ill from the infection—and was in the hospital—did Catherine and her doctors discover the ulcer. By that time, it was too late to save her toe.

An even greater problem then arose. To compensate for her lost toe, Catherine favored the side of her foot. Her neuropathy prevented her from realizing that she now walked improperly. She inadvertently put extra pressure on her foot. This may have led to Sharcot Joint, a disease that degenerates the joints and bones.

Catherine's bones fractured. But once again her neuropathy prevented her from feeling the pain. She had only vague sensations. She felt bones shifting around in her foot. Finally, when enough bones had broken, the pain came through. It was excruciating at times.

Catherine's foot healed very slowly; another complication of diabetes. She walked on crutches. She got off the crutches as soon as her bones were healed. But almost immediately her bones fractured again. She repeated this pattern of fracture and healing over a two-year period. Eventually, Catherine tried a brace. But the brace, made of metal, was heavy and ill-fitting. It hurt.

Meanwhile, Catherine's doctors urged her to agree to amputation. They recommended amputating at the knee, because foot amputations often cause complications. It was reasonable. A common plan of action.

Given her character, however, Catherine instead expanded her search for the most advanced medical treatment possible. She took a diabetes class at UCSF to learn more about Sharcot Joint. The class instructor, nurse Peggy Huang, told Catherine about the new High Risk Diabetic Foot Clinic at UC San Francisco's Diabetes Clinic.

Catherine went to the foot clinic and saw podiatrist Richard Stess. He brought into play UCSF's high technology—an advanced piece of diagnostic equipment called an Emed force plate. Catherine stepped onto the plate, and sensors embedded within it conveyed electronic information to a computer. The computer, in turn, produced an image showing pressure spots on Catherine's feet. The information helped Stess make a more refined diagnosis. As part of the Diabetes Clinic's multidisciplinary approach, Stess also referred Catherine to orthopedic surgeon Richard Maurer.

The physicians determined that a lightweight brace might help Catherine keep her leg, despite the severity of her condition. She was custom-fitted for a plastic brace that shifts pressure from her foot and ankle to her knee. The brace itself is also the result of technological advances. It is made of plastic strong enough to keep its shape. Such braces were unavailable a few years ago. The plastic then was just too soft.

The new brace has freed Catherine from a return to foot fractures, crutches, and the heavy metal brace. She can now walk the four blocks from her apartment to Union Square with relative ease. The pain in her foot has disappeared, and the swelling has subsided. As a result, her Sharcot Joint has stabilized.

Catherine may yet lose her leg to diabetes. But she knows the value of time. The longer she can walk on her own two feet the better her life. "At least I still have my leg today," she says. "That's the most important thing." —Marshall Krantz

David Powers

January/February 1991

To Our Neighbors

New Center Turns Physicians into Cholesterol Experts

Sight-Saving Discovery May Help Humans

Insulin Linked to Breast Cancer

UCSF

University of California, San Francisco
513 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94143-0462

More News for You

Pulsating Brain Cells—A New Route to Fertility?

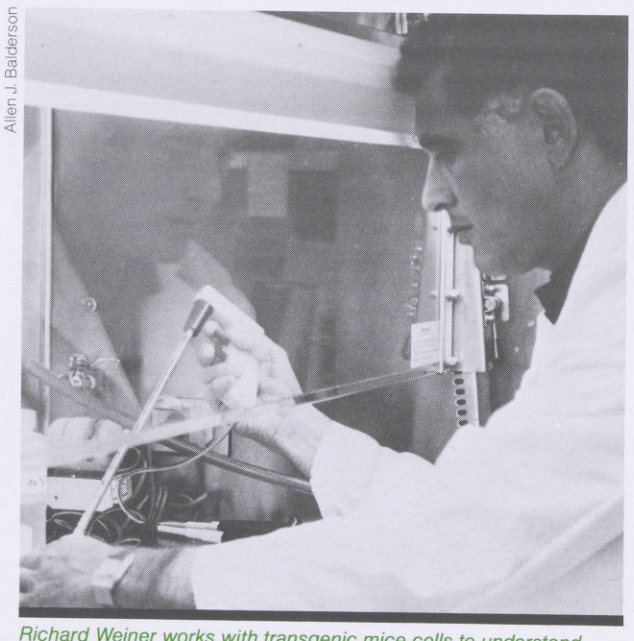
UCSF scientists have shown that a population of brain cells—about 1,500 of them—are responsible for the basic rhythm of the reproductive cycle in both men and women. They say that because these cells control human fertility, they should be researched more closely, because studies could lead to new contraceptives or ways of improving fertility.

These brain cells, called GnRh-secreting neurons, start a hormone cascade which ends in the release of a fertile egg from the ovaries and the production of fertile sperm. The pulses of these cells also stimulate the beginning of puberty in both boys and girls.

Researchers have long debated whether these cells themselves are reponsible for the release of hormones or whether other brain cells force these neurons to send out the pulses. According to UCSF physiologist Richard Weiner, professor of ob/gyn, and colleagues, the cells pulse on their own, even when removed from the brain and cultured alone.

This implies that if a drug could be found that interrupts the pulsing, it could interrupt fertility. On the other hand, a drug which corrects the pulsing could be used as a fertility drug.

Allen J. Balderson



Richard Weiner works with transgenic mice cells to understand human reproduction.

Confused About Having a Baby? Call 476-MOMS

Wondering whether you should have a baby? Or what to do now that you know you're pregnant, or what to do after your baby arrives? For some expert answers, call "Great Expectations" at 476-MOMS.

The program, which began nine years ago at Mount Zion, has blossomed into a full-service childbirth preparation and parenting resource center run by Gloria Thornton. It now is part of the UCSF childbirth preparation education program and is located in Room 898 of the Ambulatory Care Center, 400 Parnassus, hours 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed noon to 1 p.m.).

Services include helping parents choose childbirth options and connecting them with the right services; a large roster of classes and workshops relating to childbirth and parenting; a library of books, videotapes and printed materials; tours and information on the Birth Center in Moffitt/Long Hospitals.

Substance Abuse, Mental Illness Have $273 Billion Price Tag

Alcohol abuse, drug abuse and mental illness take more than 140,000 lives a year in the US. They also rob the nation of some $273 billion in treatment costs, lost and reduced productivity, and law enforcement efforts, so says a study by Dorothy P. Rice of the UCSF School of Nursing for the US Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

The study is the most definitive to date of the burden these disorders place on society. Results showed that in 1988 mental illness cost the country approximately $129.3 billion, alcohol abuse 85.8 million, and drug abuse another $58.3 billion. She noted the report examines only the economic toll taken by the trio of public health problems. "Pain, suffering and family disruption are not quantifiable," she said.

Have a Safe Trip

The UCSF Travel and Tropical Medicine Clinic offers travelers treatment for a variety of specific tropical diseases, as well as consultations to help vacationers understand what to expect and how to avoid serious health problems. The clinic is located in Room 585 of the Ambulatory Care Center, 400 Parnassus. For further information call 476-5787.

UCSF

University of California, San Francisco